

National Common Core Standards Initiative

No Child Left Behind brought accountability but not necessarily consistency in the adoption of standards across state lines. As Americans become more mobile, our children face increasing difficulty in moving from state to state or school to school, finding varying standards and related curriculum in the core areas of mathematics and language arts. The Common Core Standards Initiative is the beginning of a national effort to ameliorate those differences. Focused in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening, the Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked and designed to better prepare our young people for 21st century college and career opportunities.

This initiative is led by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), working with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, among others. Governors and State Commissioners of Education from 48 states, 2 territories and District of Columbia including Vermont signed Memoranda of Understanding in 2009 to develop and adopt these standards, a requirement linked to the acceptance of significant state funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The first official public draft of the K-12 standards was released for public comment on March 10th. They are available at: <http://www.corestandards.org>. These standards include the college and career-readiness standards that define the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses and work training programs. Those interested in providing feedback on the standards are encouraged to do so by **Friday, April 2, 2010**.

Vermont Department of Education (DOE) staff have participated in confidential review sessions and provided comment over several iterations of these standards. We found the college and career-readiness standards to be a reasonably aligned and useful extension of our current end of 10th grade expectations. We have seen significant improvement in the K-12 standards and will provide additional feedback on the latest public version.

Upon finalization of the Common Core package, DOE will work with our partner states in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and Vermont stakeholders to conduct a complete alignment of our current Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and associated Grade Expectations in mathematics and literacy with the Common Core. This formal process is designed to lead to State Board adoption by the end of 2010.

Once adopted, however, the work truly begins as educators in Vermont implement these standards across all learning environments. Student learning against 21st century standards will also need to be meaningfully assessed in a balanced system of national, state and local measures of student performance. The DOE will work with key associations, Vermont practitioners, and the broad range of stakeholders PK-16 to ensure the successful implementation of new standards and effective and appropriate methods of measurement for a variety of purposes; e.g., improving instruction; determining student proficiency in all critical standards, including those best measured by performance tasks; and program and school accountability.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with this process and welcome any questions you might have. Please feel free to contact Gail Taylor at (802) 828-5158 or gail.taylor@state.vt.us or Marty Gephart at (802) 828-1462 or marty.gephart@state.vt.us to learn more about this work.